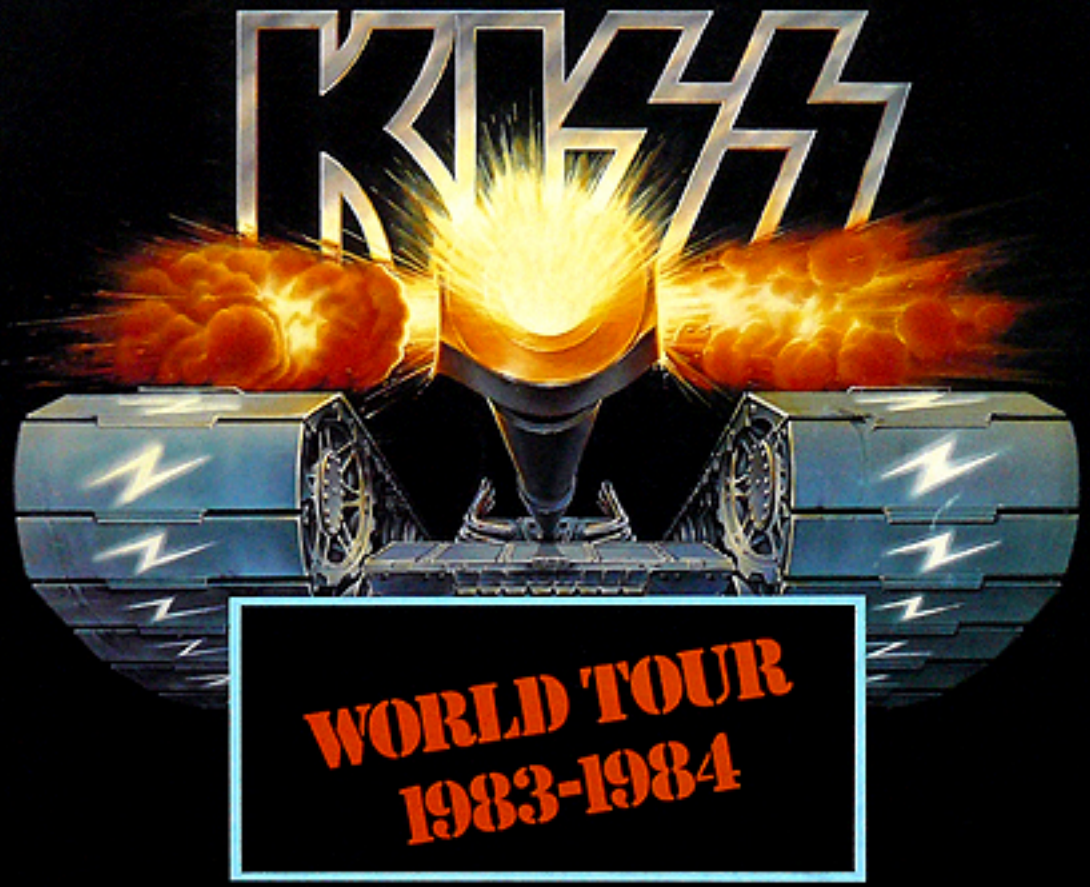
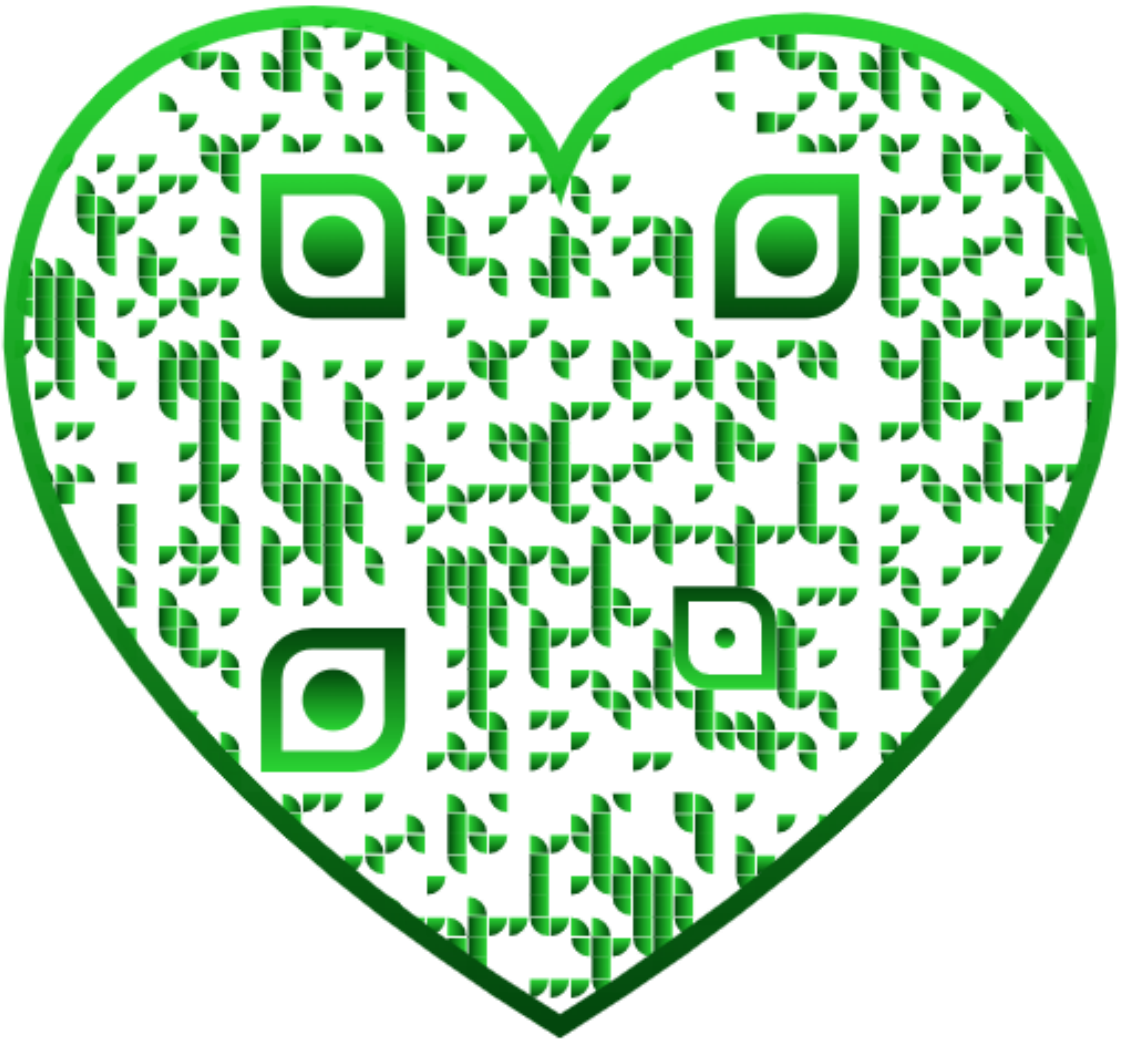


KISS ARMY



KISS
LICK IT UP

PAUL STANLEY

GENE SIMMONS

ERIC CARR

VINNIE VINCENT

KISS

Thousands of fans rise to their feet as strobe lights cut through the darkened arena and smoke clouds billow out into the crowd. Suddenly, four figures appear on stage, cranking out a sound that is 120 decibels of pure, unadulterated rock and roll power—no doubt about it, another KISS show is underway.

KISS—in the dozen years that they've ruled the rock empire, their name has become synonymous with the most exciting music in the world. Mixing their unmatched flair for showmanship with a talent for creating instantly memorable heavy metal anthems, KISS has soared to heights unmatched by any other American bands, entertaining millions of fans on four continents with their volcanic sound. Now, with the release of their latest album, *LICK IT UP*, and the start of what guitarist Paul Stanley calls "our most exciting tour ever," a new chapter in the amazing story of KISS has begun.

That story begins in New York City back in 1972. It was then that two aspiring young musicians named Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley first concocted the idea of creating the ultimate rock and roll band. Looking for other musicians who shared their unique artistic outlook, they placed an ad in Rolling Stone Magazine in an attempt to find a "drummer willing to do anything to make it." A card left by the drums of Peter Criss responded to the ad, instantly turning the fledgling outfit into a trio. A few weeks later, a UFO landed atop the band's rehearsal loft depositing one "Space" Ace Frehley. KISS was born.

"You've got to remember that when we started, John Denver was the number one act in the world," Gene Simmons says. "We wanted to go totally against what was popular at the time. We wanted to be successful—but we wanted to do it our way."

Creating an image that mixed facial makeup and black leather with their lethal sound, KISS hit the New York club circuit where they paid their dues, starting as little as $15 a performance. Their outrageous appearance and obvious talent soon created a buzz that spread across the country; eventually reaching Los Angeles, where the late Neil Bogart began taking interest in the band. Seeing their unlimited potential, a few months later Bogart signed KISS to launch his new label, Casablanca Records.

KISS quickly ventured into the recording studio, where they began cranking out LPs at six-month intervals—each more exciting and outlandish than its predecessor. First came *KISS* in February 1974, featuring such instant favorites as "Strutter" and "Nothin' to Lose." That vinyl spot was soon followed by *HOTTER THAN HELL* and *DRESSED TO KILL*, both solidifying the band's reputation as the masters of American heavy metal. While critics weren't sure exactly how to react to KISS, fans everywhere instantly gathered together to form the "Kiss Army," a denim and leather brigade whose troops stretched to the far corners of the globe. In the short span of two years, KISS had been transformed from a novelty into a phenomenon.

That phenomenon broke wide open with the release of the group's next album, *ALIVE*, a two record set that managed to capture the metallic mayhem of KISS in-concert. Tearing through such classics as "Black Diamond" and "Rock and Roll All Nite," Stanley, Simmons, Frehley and Criss played rock as it has never been played before—and in the process they emerged as the most popular American band in the world, a fact supported by the prestigious Gallup Poll.

"The *ALIVE* album really brought us into the public eye," Paul Stanley states. "It was like suddenly everybody knew who we were. To a lot of people we were overnight sensations—they didn't realize the years of hard work we had put in to get to that point."

The KISS steamroller continued to roll with the release of such albums as *DESTROYER*, *ROCK AND ROLL OVER* and *LOVE GUN*, each of which soared to the top of the charts on platinum-coated wings.

In fact, at one point in the late Seventies, KISS became the first band to simultaneously have four albums in the top 100 since the Beatles had accomplished that feat over a decade earlier!

While their albums delighted fans everywhere, it was the band's incredible live show that truly established the KISS legend. Utilizing Simmons' fire-breathing, blood-spurting exploits and Stanley's high-stepping guitar antics to enhance their thunderous sound, KISS in concert created a brand of hysteria that the rock scene had never seen before. Much of that hysteria was captured on the band's next vinyl venture, *ALIVE II*, which quickly became one of the best-selling in-concert albums of the era.

Never satisfied to rest on their accomplishments, KISS continued to expand and grow, taking time for each member to make a solo album before regrouping to record *DYNASTY*, *UNMASKED* and the *ELDER*. Each album showed different facets of the band's complex musical personality while keeping KISS' special hard rock sound intact.

"We always want to do the unexpected," Gene Simmons says with a demonic grin. "When people say to us, 'here, you can't do that,' that's when we want to do it. We never shy away from doing something different, but we'll always keep KISS as close to the original sound as possible."

By 1980, KISS had undergone a facelift with drummer Eric Carr replacing Peter Criss, who after nearly a decade with the group decided that he wanted to spend more time near his home and family. With Carr aboard, the band undertook one of their most adventurous tours ever, traveling throughout Europe and venturing to Australia for the first time. Their Australian invasion proved to be one of KISS' most extravagant and successful road ventures, with the band employing over $5 tons worth of equipment to produce the fire-and-brimstone stage spectacular.

Inspired by the success of their tour dates under, KISS returned to the States and began work on *CREATURES OF THE NIGHT*, a collection of tunes that once again affirmed KISS' position atop the heavy metal hierarchy. With the album's completion, the group set out on their first American tour in nearly three years. Joining the band for this road excursion was guitarist Vinnie Vincent, who had replaced an ailing Ace Frehley during the recording of *CREATURES*. With Vincent's burning leads bringing new luster to both the old and new KISS classics, the band's 1982 tour was undoubtedly one of the year's hottest shows.

"The lineup we have now gives us a lot of versatility," Paul Stanley says. "Vinnie's a great guitarist, and a great songwriter as well. We're just beginning to scratch the surface of his talent."

Vincent's wide-ranging skills were put to good use on the band's latest album, *LICK IT UP*, an album that confirms what KISS fans have known all along—that no band in the world rocks harder than KISS. On such tracks as "Exciter" and "Not for the Innocent," KISS once again proves that they are the ultimate heavy metal band.

"We've gone through some changes for *LICK IT UP*," Gene Simmons explains. "But the music is still the same. In fact it's harder and rougher than ever. We feel that for KISS to continue growing, we had to drop what was no longer relevant and concentrate on the music. That's exactly what we've done."

It's been an incredible twelve years for KISS—a time that has seen them perform in front of nearly ten million people, and sell in excess of fifteen million records. Throughout all that time, however, two things have remained constant; the group's commitment to playing great rock and roll, and the unique love affair that goes on between the group and its fans. "Without the fans there wouldn't be KISS," Gene Simmons says. "They're the energy source that has kept us going this long, and they're the reason we'll keep on rocking forever."

Andy Secher

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Lick It Up (September 1983)

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Tom Marzullo	Production Manager
Alexx Higgins	Stage Manager
Cathy Grunn	Wardrobe Manager
Jim Linden	Guitar Technician
Dave Bonilla	Guitar Technician
Rick "Buzz" Abramson	Drum Technician
Vince Flesington	Bass Technician
Jeff Dusting	Lighting Director
Paul Soren	Lighting Technician
Bogdan Tokiaslewicz	Lighting Technician
Achim Schulze	Sound Engineer
Tumpel Endrigkeit	Sound Technician
Ralf Ambroslus	Sound Technician
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